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RATIONS GROUP FILE

10 APR 1978

FBIS, CIA

Affiliation

MEMORANDUM FOR: Bureau and Unit Chiefs

SUBJECT : FBIS Affiliation

RESCISSION : 12 Dec 1974 ltr to Bureau and Unit Chiefs,  
same subject ☐

25X1

1. ☐ This memorandum restates our policy on acknowledging FBIS' affiliation. The guidance pertains to discussions with non-FBIS persons and does not change our policy that foreign employees who commit their futures to an FBIS career should be informally and in low key fashion advised of their affiliation.

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2. ☐ FBIS affiliation with the Agency is public knowledge. While we therefore cannot deny this affiliation, we want to avoid drawing attention to it. We must bear in mind that a safe statement in one country might damage us in others. We must avoid being an embarrassment to host governments which must contend with sensitivity to CIA activities. We feel strongly that refusing to comment on the CIA relationship is safer than an official acknowledgement.

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3. ☐ Bureau staffers should routinely be reminded to avoid volunteering to outsiders information on our affiliation. In informal conversations, staffers may point out that the bureau is part of the embassy, consulate or military unit which sponsors us and that it is administered by FBIS in Washington. They should not go beyond this unless the conversation is with U.S. officials who have a need to know or with whom evasiveness would be embarrassing.

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4. ☐ If formally questioned by a non-FBIS foreigner or by non-official Americans, staffers should gracefully refer the question to the host embassy, consulate or military command.

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25X1 5. ☐ If an official and/or public acknowledgement of our affiliation appears unavoidable, it should not be made by you. Consult with ☐ Ambassador and other appropriate officials as well as FBIS Headquarters on how to handle the development.

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25X1 6. ☐ An approved draft statement on FBIS operations and on FBIS' place within the U.S. Government structure is attached. You should complete the statement by supplying the information on your bureau and pass it to ☐ the official spokesman of your host organization and any other U.S. official in your area who is likely to be called upon to officially comment on our affiliation. You should urge the spokesman to refrain from volunteering information on FBIS affiliation with the Agency. Use any part of this letter in your discussions with the spokesman. Should any of these officers find difficulty with this approach and guidance, advise me promptly.

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Director

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Distribution:

Orig. & 1 - Addressee  
1 - E&PS  
1 - Exec Reg  
1 - D/FBIS

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1979 IG Report on FBISIdentification with CIA

The problem of notifying foreign nationals about their true affiliation with the CIA has been outlined in the bureau reports. The policy needs review. Although the Director, FBIS told the inspection team that all foreign nationals had been so advised, we found during inspections in the field that this was not the case and that notification policies varied widely from bureau to bureau. Some bureau chiefs directly advise employees of their Agency ties; others do so only if pressed. In the view of one chief, his foreign employees preferred a policy that would allow them plausible denial, under threat, of CIA affiliation. In our judgment, a consistent policy needs to be established concerning the notification of foreign national employees of CIA affiliation.

Efforts to Resolve Problems in Managing Foreign Employees

It would be incorrect to imply that FBIS has not tried over the years to solve the problems it has encountered in managing its foreign national employees. It would be equally incorrect to claim that no progress has been made. One recent important action was the effort to define, in an unclassified "Alien Administration Handbook," the regulations, procedures, and benefits that apply to foreign

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

P.O. Box 2604

Washington, D. C. 20013

(Letter sent to all bureau and unit chiefs)

FBIS affiliation with the Agency has been noted in public print on several recent occasions. While we cannot and do not wish to deny this affiliation, we must ensure that we do what we can to minimize the threat to our overseas operations and embarrassment to host governments. A careful review and update of our practice in dealing with questions concerning our affiliation is therefore in order.

All of your Staffers should be instructed to avoid volunteering any information on your bureau's Agency affiliation. In informal conversations, staffers may point out that the bureau is part of the embassy, consulate or military unit which sponsors us and that it is administered by FBIS in Washington. Do not go beyond this. If the conversation is with U.S. officials who have a need to know, or with whom failure to respond would be embarrassing, you of course may be more forthcoming.

If formally questioned by a non-American or by non-official Americans, we prefer that you gracefully refer the question to the embassy, consulate or military command under which you operate. You should then alert the COS, Ambassador, and other appropriate officials as well as FBIS Headquarters. We have enclosed an approved draft statement on FBIS operations and on FBIS' place within the U.S. Government structure for use by local U.S. spokesman. You should complete the draft statement in finished form, supplying the particulars of your bureau, and submit it to the spokesman together with the background information, which is for his information only. Do not submit to direct questioning.

You should urge the spokesman to refrain from commenting on reports of FBIS affiliation with the CIA. We have to bear in mind that a safe statement in one country might damage us in others. We must avoid being an embarrassment to host governments which must contend with growing sensitivity to CIA activities. Even though the affiliation is in the public record, we feel strongly that refusing to comment on the CIA relationship is safer than an official

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acknowledgement. If an acknowledgement of our affiliation appears unavoidable, it should not be made by you and you should seek a delay of the statement if possible until FBIS Headquarters has been consulted.

I suggest that you discuss this guidance with the Chief of Station and the official spokesman of your sponsoring organization (embassy, military, etc.) and any other U.S. official in your area who is likely to be called on to officially comment on our affiliation. You should advise Headquarters promptly if any of these find difficulty with this guidance and the enclosed statement. Where no problems appear, please report implementation routinely in your next monthly report.

Sincerely,

  
Director

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Enclosure

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

P. O. Box 2604  
Washington, D. C. 20013

MHQ-5090  
8 August 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Bureau Chiefs

FROM:

  
Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

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SUBJECT: Identification of Foreign National Employees with CIA

1. In the 1979 inspection of FBIS, the Inspector General's report recommended that a "consistent policy needs to be established concerning the notification of foreign national employees of CIA affiliation." In its rebuttal to the IG Report, FBIS management stated that a "uniform policy on informing or not informing foreign national employees that they work for CIA would cause many FBIS managers concern." The FBIS statement went on to state: "It is quite a different situation for a sophisticated associate editor at London Bureau to be aware of such an affiliation than it is for a chauffeur in Bahrain, for example. If implemented, a policy of uniformly informing foreign nationals of their CIA affiliation could cause serious problems in our relations with ambassadors, host governments, and the more sensitive or uneducated FN employees. We would prefer that this requirement be broadened to simply require that we adopt a policy that will be consistent with operational needs. FBIS, as an overt organization, should not be in a position where it needs to make either a formal declaration to all its FN's that it is part of a larger intelligence organization or, on the other hand, be forced to keep it a secret from them." Directorate management concurred in the FBIS position.

2. As many of you will recall, this subject was discussed at a bureau chiefs conference in the spring of 1980. It was decided that bureau chiefs would be left to their own discretion as to how much was to be told to foreign national employees about the CIA affiliation, dependent on local operational conditions. It was noted that it is not a lie to state that foreign national employees are working for the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. It is the belief of many bureau chiefs that foreign national employees, even though they may be told or informally learn of FBIS' affiliation with the Agency, prefer the ability to make "plausible denial" as to their knowledge of FBIS affiliation with CIA.

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**SECRET****SUBJECT: Identification of Foreign National Employees with CIA**

3. It is therefore FBIS policy to give bureau chiefs discretion in informing foreign national employees about the CIA affiliation. It is not a secret, of course. At the same time, we do not advertise our affiliation when operating abroad. Bureau chiefs may use their own judgment as to how much they care to impart to a prospective employee, or an employee on duty. It may be quite sufficient to state that the employee will be working with the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, which is administratively connected with a larger intelligence organization, serves all elements of the U.S. foreign affairs community, and receives directives from the National Security Council. In many cases it will be sufficient to state that FBIS collects information from foreign media for the U.S. Government and operates as part of the U.S. mission. If the employee is notified of the CIA connection, he/she should be warned that this is not to be discussed publicly.

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FBIS NOTICE  
12 August 1985MANAGEMENT  
N 7-14

SUBJECT: Identification of Foreign National Employees With the Agency

1. The identification of foreign national employees with the Agency is obviously a sensitive matter, of particular concern to the foreign national employee. All foreign national employees sign application forms and papers indicating they are employees of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The FBIS performs the function for the U.S. Government of monitoring foreign media for information of interest. The foreign national employee is hired to assist in this function, not to engage in other intelligence collection activities.

2. The FBIS policy on notification to foreign national applicants or employees of the FBIS-Agency affiliation is as follows:

a. FBIS bureau chiefs or recruiters may informally advise applicants or employees of the FBIS-Agency connection if, in their own discretion, it is operationally suitable to do so. FBIS must guard against creating embarrassment or problems for our ambassadors, the host governments, and our foreign national employees.

b. It may be presumed that foreign national employees will learn informally from their supervisors and/or colleagues of the FBIS-Agency affiliation, which is public knowledge in the United States.

c. When appropriate, bureau chiefs and supervisors should caution foreign national employees not to publicly discuss the FBIS-Agency affiliation; it would not be in their interest, nor the interest of FBIS, for them to do so.

d. In most instances it may be quite sufficient for bureau chiefs and supervisors to stress the functions of FBIS and the fact that it serves all elements of the U.S. foreign affairs community.

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FBIS NOTICE  
12 August 1985

MANAGEMENT  
N 7-14

SUBJECT: Identification of Foreign National Employees With the Agency

e. If pressed, bureau chiefs are authorized to tell foreign national employees of the Agency affiliation, stressing that the FBIS collection function at its bureaus has no connection with other Agency activities. They should be cautioned not to discuss this further with non-FBIS people.

f. Bureau chiefs should keep in mind that many foreign national employees would prefer not to be formally notified of the FBIS-Agency connection, in order to allow them the ability to deny such knowledge. Hence the preference for informal advisement.

3. Bureau chiefs should carefully consider their operational situation with regard to the Mission and the host government in applying the above. We cannot deny the FBIS-Agency affiliation, but neither do we want to advertise it.



/ Director

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